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TAGS: PGOV KAWC HR WAR CRIMES
SUBJECT: GLAVAS: PROSECUTOR ASKS PARLIAMENT TO STRIP
IMMUNITY

REF: A. ZAGREB 233

¶B. ZAGREB 01
¶C. 05 ZAGREB 1254
¶D. 05 ZAGREB 827

Classified By: Ambassador Ralph Frank for reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

¶1. (U) SUMMARY AND COMMENT: Chief State Prosecutor Mladen
Bajic asked Parliament on April 25 to strip Osijek strongman
Branimir Glavas of his immunity as an MP in order to indict
him on charges of war crimes against ethnic Serb civilians in
1991 (reftels). Speaker of Parliament Vladimir Seks, who
served as chief of the Osijek wartime Crisis Headquarters at
the time of some of the crimes but with no operational
authority, has forwarded the request to the Committee on
Credentials and Privileges which could make a recommendation
to Parliament before the next full session on May 10. Given
the serious nature of the accusations, which include both
individual and command responsibility for systematic torture
and execution, Seks expressed confidence that Parliament
would approve the request.

¶2. (C) Glavas, who also serves as city council president in
Osijek, has called the charges a political attack aimed at
toppling the local government, which is dominated by Glavas
loyalists who broke ranks with PM Ivo Sanader and his ruling
Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) last year. In retaliation,
Glavas has threatened to pin responsibility on Seks, who was
technically Glavas' superior in the chain of command. In
reality, however, Seks had no operational authority in Osijek
and likely has little to answer for from his wartime service.
 Bajic was extremely careful in preparing this case given the
political sensitivity, and both the Croatian public and the
international community are much too interested for
Parliament to refuse the prosecutor's request. END SUMMARY
AND COMMENT.

THE THICK DOSSIER AGAINST SLAVONIA'S KINGPIN

¶3. (C) Bajic told PolOff previously that he would not indict
Glavas without compelling evidence, or he would risk being
accused of being a political pawn. He recently crossed that
threshold, telling PolOff that at least one witness who was
previously too frightened to testify had finally agreed to
appear. According to press reports, there are at least eight
witnesses and torture victims currently in Serbia who have
given testimony to an investigative judge -- this can now be
used as evidence at trial even if the witnesses themselves do
not appear.

¶4. (C) Bajic carefully set the stage for his latest move.
Not coincidentally, the news of the request to strip Glavas'

immunity comes in the wake of April indictments against Fred
Margus and Tomislav Dilber, both accused of similar crimes
against ethnic Serb civilians in Osijek and both feared by
many potential witnesses. Bajic is also making full use of
Croatia's witness protection capabilities, which have
improved markedly since last year in part due to USG
assistance.

GLAVAS LASHES OUT AS NOOSE TIGHTENS

¶5. (C) After months of blustery attacks against the ongoing
investigation and comments that he heroically saved the city
doing what the war required ("I wasn't running a
kindergarten," he explained), Glavas now clearly feels
cornered. He is threatening essentially to bring Seks and
the HDZ down with him, saying Seks and other HDZ appointees
were "only one floor above me and they are responsible for
all decisions." He plans to use his 15 minutes at the next
Parliamentary session to tell everything that has "so far
been unknown to the Croatian public and international
institutions."

¶6. (C) COMMENT: Intimidation is the Glavas trademark, and his
latest comments are clearly a bluff to discourage moves to
strip his parliamentary immunity. END COMMENT.

FRANK